



Our World: Paradoxes, Problems and the Need to Change

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Aknowledgments

- I would like to express my gratitude for this opportunity to share with you some thoughts about the world in which we live.
- I hope that this meeting will be one of many between this important center of knowledge and thought and the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*.



Introduction

- Some of the characteristics of our world that come to my attention are the paradoxes and problems that we are witnessing.
- Although world population has improved its standards of living since the second half of the last century, this improvement has occurred at very different rates among regions and countries.



Introduction

- Last year the world population reached 7 billion. UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon said:



Introduction

- ✓ “We have enough food for everyone, yet nearly a billion go hungry. We have the means to eradicate many diseases, yet they continue to spread. We have the gift of a rich natural environment, yet it remains subject to daily assault and exploitation. All people of conscience dream of peace, yet too much of the world is in conflict and steeped in armaments.”



The Paradoxes of our World

- We live in the information and communication age. Large amounts of information are transmitted in real time from one end of the planet to the other.
- Yet, in 2009 there were 793 million illiterate people aged 15 years and over, and 139 million children and adolescents of primary and of lower secondary school age, respectively, missed their education altogether.



The Paradoxes of our World

- Health care advances allow us to prevent, cure or treat most diseases.
- However, almost 20 percent of the deaths among children under 5 years of age could have been prevented; that is, nearly 1 million 500 thousand deaths.



The Paradoxes of our World

- World life expectancy at birth increased from 47.7 years in 1950 to 69.3 years in 2010.
- Notwithstanding, the gap between the most developed regions (78 years life expectancy) and the less developed countries (59 years life expectancy) is almost of 20 years.



The Paradoxes of our World

- Between 1950 and 2010 the infant mortality rate in the less developed countries fell 62 percent, from 191.5 to 72.5 deaths per 1,000 births.
- Yet the current infant mortality rate in less developed countries remains 22 per cent higher than the rate in the most developed regions during 1950 (59.8 per 1,000 births).



The Paradoxes of our World

- We boast about the knowledge society and an economy based on scientific research, innovation and technological development.
- Yet this is not a reality for all countries. It is true only for developed countries and some emerging markets.
- For most countries, this is just an aspiration.



The Paradoxes of our World

➤ For example:

- ✓ In Western Europe and North America 72 out of 100 young people are enrolled in higher education.
- ✓ In Latin America, South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, only 38, 13 and 6 out of 100, respectively, are in higher education.



The Paradoxes of our World

- Among countries, inequalities are even more unacceptable:

South Korea	100 out of 100
Greece	91 out of 100
Finland	91 out of 100
Ethiopia	4 out of 100
Burundi	3 out of 100
Republic of Niger	1 out of 100

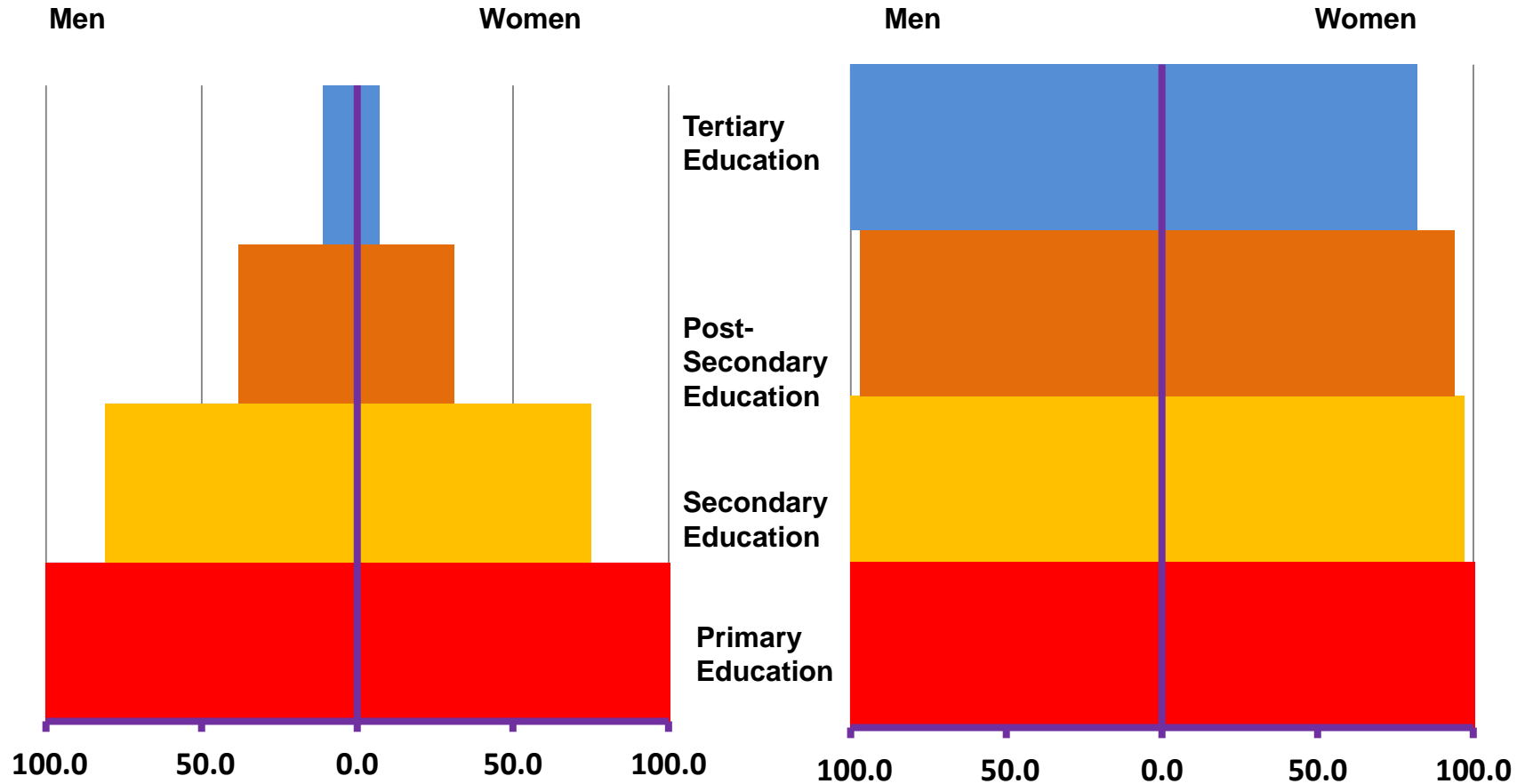


The Paradoxes of our World

Gross Enrolment Ratio, 2009

Ghana

South Korea



Source: UNESCO, Global Education Digest 2011, Comparing Education Statistics Across the World, 2011.



Our World: The Major Problems



The Major Problems

- Demographic conditions
- Poverty
- Old and new plagues
- The loss of values



The Major Problems: Demographic Conditions

- 82 percent of the more than 7 billion people in the world lives in the least developed countries.
- 1.6 billion people are between 12 and 24 years old; 850 million are between the ages of 18 and 24.
- In 2050, the world population will reach over 9 billion people.



The Major Problems: Demographic Conditions

- The population of the most developed countries (1.2 billion people today) will have increased 70 millions by 2050.
- The population of the poorest countries (5.8 billion people today) will have increased 2.2 billion during the same period, that is, 32 times more than in the developed countries.



The Major Problems: Poverty

- In absolute numbers, there has never been so much poverty on Earth: 2.6 billion people live on less than US \$2 dollars a day.
- Of these 2.6 billion, 1.4 billion live on less than US \$1.25 dollars a day. That is, in extreme poverty.
- There are still over a billion hungry people, and more than 2 billion people are deficient in micronutrients.



The Major Problems: Poverty

- 129 million children are underweight and 195 million under 5 are stunted.
- 1 billion people do not have access to clean water, and 2.4 billion do not have access to sanitation.



The Major Problems: Old Plagues

- About half of the world's population is at risk of malaria.
- According to the WHO an estimated 216 million cases of malaria in 2010 led to approximately 655 thousand deaths –86 percent of these in children under the age of five.



The Major Problems: Old Plagues

- During the same year, 1.7 million people died from tuberculosis. That is, 26 deaths for every 100,000 population.



The Major Problems: New Plagues

- Despite the advances against HIV, there were 2.7 million new HIV infections in 2010.
- Today, 34 million people are living with HIV worldwide, up 17 percent from 2001.
- An estimated 3.4 million children are living with HIV/AIDS.



The Major Problems: New Plagues

- Tobacco kills nearly 6 million people each year.
- Tobacco related deaths will increase to more than 8 million per year by 2030. 4 of every 5 deaths will be in low- and middle-income countries.



The Major Problems: New Plagues

- 346 million people worldwide have diabetes.
- In 2011, an estimated 4.6 million people between the ages of 20 and 70 died from diabetes.
- Between 2010 and 2011 the number of diabetes related deaths rose 13.3 percent.



The Major Problems: New Plagues

- At least 2.8 million adults die each year as a result of being overweight or obese.
- In 2008, more than 1.4 billion adults, 20 and older, were overweight. Of these almost 500 million were obese.



The Major Problems: The Loss of Values

- Solidarity among people has been lost and instead extreme competitiveness has been favored.
- Contempt towards the spirit of service, knowledge, research and the disciplines considered as non-productive has increased.



The Major Problems: The Loss of Values

- Arts and humanities are at threat by those who consider that the accumulation of money and material goods are the real markers of success.
- By those who believe that the most important thing in life is to make a lot of money –the sooner, the better.



Our World: New Problems



New Problems

- Drug addiction
- Unemployment
- Migration



New Problems: Drug Addiction

- The global war on drugs has not yielded the expected results.
- In the last decade the number of drug users rose from 180 million people to nearly 210 million.



New Problems: Drug Addiction

- According to the Global Commission on Drug Policy, between 1998 and 2008, the consumption of opiates increased 34 percent; of cocaine 27 percent, and of cannabis 8.5 per cent.
- The Commission stated that the implementation of the war on drugs “has generated widespread negative consequences for societies in producer, transit and consumer countries.”



New Problems: Unemployment

- For the fourth consecutive year, global unemployment rate remained elevated: around 6 percent.
- In 2011 there were more than 197 million people unemployed around the world, nearly 27 million people more than in 2007.



New Problems: Unemployment

- An additional 3 million unemployed around the world will be added to the existing statistic of unemployment, giving a total of 200 million in 2012.
- This will occur despite the economic growth of 5 per cent in 2010 and 4 percent in 2011.



New Problems: Migration

- UN estimates that there are least 214 million people in the world today that live in a country other than the one where they were born.



New Problems: Migration

- A sizable part of that migration springs from poverty, unemployment, violence and insecurity.
- International migration generates conflicts among countries, which become obstacles that hinder them from having beneficial relations for their people.



Our World: The Young People



The Young People

- As Rector of a higher education institution, young people are my biggest concern.
- They are the ones who suffer most the problems of today's world.



The Young People

- 1.6 billion persons aged 12-24 in 2012, that is 23 percent of the world's population.
- The world does not give hope to the youth.
- Young people are outraged, disheartened and unemployed; whether it be USA, Spain, Mexico, Chile or the Arab countries they are protesting...



The Young People

- Rulers seem to be blind and deaf to the clamor of the youth.
- In 2012, there will be 74.5 million unemployed youth, that is one third of the total number of unemployed persons.
- Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults.



The Young People

- I think that Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, summarized very well the demand of the youth when she said:
 - ✓ “Every young woman and man must be given the chance to take part in the decision-making that shapes our societies and that will define their futures.”



By way of conclusion





By way of conclusion

- It would seem as if while the world becomes more populated, we become less human and less thoughtful with one another.



By way of conclusion

- It is urgent to place the human person at the core of public policies.
- In today's world, the State has shrunk. State's social vocation must be recovered.



By way of conclusion

- Inequality is a major global problem that requires immediate answer. Education and science must contribute to reduce the gaps produced by inequality.
- Science must take care of the lags and of the needs of the present but it also shall foresee the demands that future challenges will bring about.



By way of conclusion

- Universities are essential elements of the economy based on knowledge –they constitute the backbone of innovation and productivity.
- State, governments and the private sector must make fruitful use of the universities' experience, intellectual capabilities, knowledge, infrastructure and equipment.



By way of conclusion

- There are people living in non-democratic countries who are fighting in order to establish democracy, and they are succeeding in their purpose. But there are also people who live in democratic countries which are questioning democracy –they want more.
- The time has come to make major changes to the development model, to ponder the need of having a Charter of Human Duties, to act responsibly towards life and the time to come.